

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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\*\*FACT SHEET INCLUDED

## **STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT**

WASHINGTON, DC: Today, as the Senate prepares to take up the Employee Free Choice Act with a possible vote on Thursday, Senator Kennedy issued the following statement. Also below is a fact sheet on how the Act will help restore middle class security.

"Now that the House has passed the Employee Free Choice Act with bipartisan support, I'm pleased that the Senate is moving forward on this important piece of legislation. We've finally raised the minimum wage but we still have a long way to go to restore the economic security that has been lost during the Bush years. Working people aren't getting their fair share of our economic growth. Their hard work is producing skyrocketing corporate profits – not higher paychecks, better benefits, or better lives for their families. The best way to see that employees get their fair share is to give them a stronger voice."

### **THE EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT RESTORES MIDDLE CLASS SECURITY**

The Bush economy is not working for working Americans.

\* Americans are working harder than ever in the Bush economy. Productivity has been rising and companies are making huge profits on the backs of their workers. Corporate profits are up by more than 83% since 2001.

\* Inequality has also reached alarming levels. Today, more than 40% of total income is going to the wealthiest 10 percent of Americans – the biggest gap in more than 65 years.

\* Six million Americans have lost their health insurance, and their retirement security is fading as well. We have created an economy that works for Wall Street, but not Main Street, and working families are being left behind.

\* It's little wonder that most Americans want a voice at work in these insecure times. In a recent survey, 58 percent of Americans indicated they would join a union if they could, a record number.

The freedom to choose a union is vital to restoring the American Dream, especially for the most vulnerable Americans.

\* Unions help American workers get their fair share – union wages are almost 30% higher than non-union wages. Unions are also a cure for rising inequality because they raise wages more for low- and middle-wage workers than for higher-wage workers.

- Union cashiers earn 46% more than non-union cashiers.
- Union food preparation workers earn nearly 50% more than non-union workers.
- Union maids and housekeepers earn 31% more than their non-union counterparts.

\* The freedom to join a union is a women's issue and a civil rights issue. Union women earn 31 percent more than women workers who don't have a union. African American union members earn 36 percent more, and Latino workers earn 46 percent more.

\* Union workers are almost twice as likely to have employer-sponsored health benefits and a pension at work. They are more than four times more likely to have a secure, defined-benefit pension plan than non-union workers.

\* Protecting the freedom to choose a union benefits all Americans, whether or not they have a union at work. In industries and occupations where many workplaces are unionized, non-union employers will frequently meet union standards or otherwise improve compensation. A high school graduate in a non-union workplace whose industry is 25 percent unionized gets paid 5 percent more than similar workers in less unionized industries.

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